

**DDS-South Region
Regional Advisory and Planning Council
Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2009**

Members Present: Chair Claire White, Carol Cooney, Michael Del Sole, John (Jack) Frost, Steven Fusti, Nancy Kalal, Danielle Shepard, Kim Wollschleager, and Mary McKay, RD DDS South/Ex-Officio Member.

Members Absent: Marianne Burke, April Dipollina, and Jill Hall.

I. Chairperson's Report

Call to Order - Chair White called the meeting to order at 6:10pm.

Citizen Comment – None presented.

Welcome New Council Members –Chair White welcomed Ms. Cooney to the Council and thanked her for her interest in becoming a member. Ms. Hall was not present at the meeting.

Review of Minutes – A review of the June 24, 2009, meeting minutes ensued. In the presence of a quorum, and upon a motion duly made and seconded, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2009, meeting with the correction noted during to the meeting.

Statewide Council on Developmental Services Update – Mr. Frost said he was not able to attend the Council's last meeting. He then presented Ms. McKay with a copy of a memo Secretary Genaurio sent to Agency Heads recently. Ms. McKay said she would review the status of the budget later in the meeting.

II. Regional Director's Updates

Legislative Update – The budget passed without the Governor's signature. Now, through a series of implementer bills, the general assembly must vote on how money in the budget is to be spent. A special session is currently underway for this purpose. Next, Ms. McKay talked about the memo Secretary Genaurio sent to Agency Heads, which relates to FY2010 Budget Implementation. The memo advises agencies that *The 2009-2010 Appropriation Act includes bottom line adjustments (lapses) to General Fund appropriations of over \$473 million, which will result in a significant number of adjustments to agency-specific appropriations.* Additional unspecified reductions will be required in the coming fiscal year. We do not yet know how that might affect DDS.

Ms. McKay shared with the Council the passing of the following bills during the 2009 session of the general assembly:

- **S.B. No. 301 (Public Act 09-115) AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS.** This act requires a group health insurance policy to cover the diagnosis of autism spectrum disorders and expands the requirements on insurers to cover treatment of these disorders.
- **S.B. No. 872 (Public Act 09-66) AN ACT PROVIDING STATE-FUNDED MEDICAL COVERAGE TO CHILDREN IN THE CARE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES.** This act expands eligibility for state-funded medical assistance to include children under the Department of Developmental Services' (DDS) voluntary services program who are not receiving, have not yet qualified for, or are ineligible for Medicaid.

Non-budgetary legislative proposals for FY10 are being accepted at this time. Council ideas are welcome.

Budget Update – The budget, as passed by the legislature on 8/31/09, allows the Department to meet its' responsibilities. Ms. McKay cautioned that things could change, as the state's economic future unfolds. The Governor's office is concerned about state revenues. DDS' budget could be adversely affected through implementer language, and additional recessions or holdbacks down the road. The current FY10 budget includes funding for all high school grads and age-outs. All families have been notified of the October 1 start date. Bridge funding allowed some consumers (those most in need) to start their day programs during the summer. The current budget does not include funding for the waitlist, which forces DDS to rely on recycled resources and opportune vacancies to fund people on the waitlist. Forensics funding is stable. Reductions to VSP were made. B-3 program expenditures are being monitored closely. There was no COLA for providers.

DDS lost 395 employees as the result of the State's Retirement Incentive Program. The Department has received approval to fill 72 positions. The focus for refills will be on nursing, case manager and clinical staff.

2010 Conversion Plan – DDS is implementing a plan to convert 17 CLAs. Operations of the homes' programs will be turned over to private providers. The Department successfully carried out a larger CLA conversion six years ago. Four homes in the SR will be converted, one in Guilford and three in Hamden. It is important to note that effected consumers will remain in their current homes. An RFP selection committee has been established. Staff and family members will serve on the committee. DDS staff currently assigned to the homes will be reassigned to fill the 162 direct care vacancies created by the retirement program. Parent meetings were held in each region. It is estimated that the conversion will

yield a \$7.2M annualized saving to the state and upward of \$168M over the next 20 years.

DDS Helpline Service for Families – Each Region has established a Helpline designed to provide frontline support to families with no case manager. Six out of ten new case manager positions will go to support Helpline services; two per Region. DDS is currently focusing on Helpline education and outreach. A Helpline brochure is currently under development and once completed will be distributed to families and schools. Helpline services will be the topic of this year’s fall family forums.

Family Grant Process – DDS has instituted changes to the family grant process. Going forward, grants will be dispersed based on need. Families will need to reapply for the grant each year. Changes to the process were communicated to families in a letter. The new process provides for a more equitable distribution of funds. The total amount of family grant funds available annually in the South Region is \$1.3M.

Camp Harkness – Provider summer camps were a great success. First time programs OakHill’s camp for young ladies with autism and a day camp run by the New London ARC. Family tent sites were booked through the season. Danielle said that she camped with her family for a week and had a great time. Ms. McKay noted that over 10,000 people in July and nearly 12,000 in August visited the park. DDS makes the property available to other fundraising groups throughout the year. Amenities like the boundless playground and covered grilling pavilion are the result of projects collaborated on by state and private partnerships. The Strides Road Race sponsored by the New London ARC and the Cactus Jack Foundation will be held at Camp Harkness on October 4.

DDS WaitList – In response to a question about whether placements on the waitlist are numbered, Ms. McKay said that individuals are assigned a Priority status number (i.e. P1) but the wait list is not strictly numeric. The order in which an individual receives residential supports is determined by a number of variables associated with determining one’s urgency of need, i.e. LON, age of caregivers, length of time waiting, etc.

III. New Business

Fall Family Forums – Role of the RAC – Ms. McKay offer council members an opportunity to volunteer to serve on a planning committee for the Region’s upcoming forums. Following discussion, the Council recommended extending an invitation to representatives of CPAC, the FSN, and Family 2 Family. Some time could be set-aside at the end of the formal presentation so each could share information on their respective organizations. A suggestion was made to invite school district personnel to the forums, as it has long been a goal of this council to bridge the gap between DDS and the local school districts. Next, discussion

turned the location of the forums. It was agreed that the Region would hold forums in New Haven, Middletown, and East Lyme. Clair and Jack volunteered to serve on the planning committee. April will be contacted as well, since she has expressed an interest in helping out in the past. Thomas Dailey, IFS ARD, is chairing the committee and will be following up with volunteers.

IV. Adjournment

With no further business before the Council, Chair White adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.

V. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the DDS-South Region Advisory and Planning Council will be held on November 18, 2009, at 6pm at the Henry Carter Hull Library, Clinton, CT.

Minutes Submitted By:

Jolie Crescimano-Goss

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